1: Orans E-5 (1957-1958) 1965
AW42 Santal AW42

602 All interaction among Santal is in part regulated by kinship. For a traditional Santal, it is really impossible to establish a relationship of any depth except on the firm bedrock of kinship. [123] Even the queer saheb anthropologist had to be incorporated into the system and make the utmost effort to maintain properly his ramified kinship relations, including ceremonial greetings, joking, and avoidance relations.

602 609 While incorporation into the system is possible, as in the case of an anthropologist or a member of some other caste, it is not the same as with a Santal. No outsider can attain clan membership or affiliation with a local lineage, and there remains an obvious difference between the "fictitious" kinship ties among Santal and those among Santal and outsiders. Indeed, sometimes ties between Santal involving rather close relationships, as among "fictitious" brothers, especially if they are enduring, are difficult to distinguish from relations among actual brothers. In such cases the fictitious brother, originally from some other village or region, may be incorporated into the local lineage of his "brothers," provided that he belongs to the same sub-clan as well; the Santal maintain that the rituals within the various local lineages belonging to a common sub-clan are identical, though in fact they vary considerably.

614 Thus while the clan, like the tribe, is both acephalous and non-corporate, it actively serves to maintain and structure the ties of kinship which exist among all Santal. Furthermore, as the most extended of patrilinear kin groupings, and as the ultimately exogamous unit, the clans are necessarily interdependent and thereby contribute to the numerous affinal ties binding together their constituent social units.

While it is unclear from accounts of the northern Santal just who it is that participates in the ceremonial functions assigned

/For kinship relationships associated with marriage rituals, passim, see category 116, pp. 29-86./

2; Skrefsrud M-5 (1870-1871) 1942 AW42 Santal AW42

584 [605] there are no cousins (sons of father's brothers), a son of some other man will do, provided he stands in the relationship of cousin.

Now they bring a loṭa which they hand to the wife of the bridegroom's elder brother and say to her: Please, take the bridegroom round. The anointing girls take the mat in their arms, and the wife of the bridegroom's elder brother guides them, and having taken the loṭa with water she pours out a little round about. They go round three times; thereupon the anointing girls spread out the mat, and the bridegroom, his follower and the conductor of ceremonies sit down on this.

The Jǫg Mạńjhi then says: Please say to the bridegroom's mother that she may come. She comes; now they have oil and turmeric in a leaf-cup, and they say to the Jǫg Mạńjhi: Tell the bridegroom's mother that she should smear some oil and turmeric on the cheek of her son. When she has done this, the Jǫg Mạńjhi says to the anointing girls: Now his mother has prepared the way, please, anoint the bridegroom. They do this; and the marriage-broker says to them: Make yourselves ready, it is becoming night; come along. They are now on the point of starting.

They then ask the marriage-broker: Will you take us along the highroad or along a path? He says: I shall take us along the highroad. They take with them two rupees and a brass-necklet, further a kettle-drum and a Ram's horn[16]; drumming and blowing the horn they go on. When they reach the village, they stop at the end of the village street. The marriage-broker goes in advance to the bride's home and says to them: See, we have come, please meet us with water, and show us where you are putting us up. Now some people in the village may have an empty house[17], and they say to the Jǫg Mạńjhi: Do go and find out and bring us word. He finds such a place; and carrying a loṭa with water on a leaf-plate on the palm of his hand turned upwards he goes to the bridegroom's party and says to them: Come along, you of the bridegroom's party[18], I shall take us to the lodgings. Then they go there. The bridegroom's party say to the Jǫg Mạńjhi and the Goḍet: Please, get us firewood and leaves, two earthenware cooking pots for the rice, one earthenware small vessel, some wooden spoons and ladles, and show us where we can get water; where shall we find it when it is night? And also get us a flat basket, please, to pour the cooked rice out in. They bring them all this.

Thereupon the bridegroom's party pour out the fatigue removing beer; they give the Jǫg Mạńjhi and his companion and also drink themselves. The Jǫg Mạńjhi and his companion then say to them: Do prepare your food, and when we get ready we shall call you.

---

[16] See Santal Dictionary s. v. Hindi Rāmsinga. [17] i. e., where there is nothing that the presence of strangers might contaminate. [18] It might be noted that the word, here and elsewhere, translated "bridegroom's party" stands for those who represent the family and especially the village community of the bridegroom. The word (bạrlạtko) is of Aryan origin, which may be of some significance.

[609] [192] [602]

2: Skrefsrud M-5 (1870-1871) 1942 AW42 Santal AW42

leave for ever this house; what is ill, what is diseased, may that recover, may it get well; what there is of pain, of suffering, mayest thou fasten, mayest thou make less; like water in a hollowed out hole in a river, in a spring pool, may he become pure, may he become well, Lord, Father my Thakur. 755

Thereupon he spreads out (rice) for the bongas of the places along the boundary. He then says to these: Here, O Lords, ye are here in these parts, in stumps and in roots, in water, anywhere, in recesses, in holes, ye who are moving, come near, and ye who do not move, be witnesses from a distance, favour it.

Thereupon he brings roots and crushes them for the patient. If the patient recovers by this, well and good; if not, the ojha says: I am unable to manage it; apply to the village headman and his deputy; somebody, who knows who, are instigating and entering into this.

k. Concerning relatives.

Among the relatives, excepting those of both parents (i. e., of husband and wife), they like those on the wife's side best. For the maternal uncles and their family and for the brothers of the wife husband and wife have much thought. They mostly visit these. When they are visited, they kill a good many fowls and pigs, and they give them much beer and food. And the two themselves also show them much hospitality. They also love and show hospitality to the brothers of the husband or the maternal uncles on the husband's side and their families, but not to such a degree. There is a folk tale: Once, who knows when, they tell, the maternal and paternal uncles of a child had come on a visit and met at the couple's house. When they had had their noon meal, it commenced to threaten to rain. At this time the woman took the child on her hip and fondled it in the court-yard; then she said: In the direction of the home of your maternal uncles, my child, heavy heavy clouds have arisen, it is black there; in the direction of the home of your paternal uncles there is a clear sky. Then the brothers of her husband came out and looked about; there were the same kind of clouds everywhere; consequently it dawned upon them: the wife wants to send us away, so that she may entertain her brothers. Thereupon, pleading something or other as an excuse, they quietly took themselves off; what could they otherwise do? Then her brothers were also on the point of going. But then she says to them: Don't, my elder brothers, go away, there is a pot of weak, weak beer, stay to-day. When it became evening, she poured out beer, and she made her husband kill a pig. She gave them any amount of meat, rice, and beer; they ate and drank abundantly. 602 [539]

The women do not turn their back to the relatives on their husband's side; they keep water for the children (i. e., arrange for their support), in order that when their father is no more, they may teach them to worship the spirits; but they have not much love for them, it is only for the sake of profit.

2: Skrefsrud M-5 (1870-1871) 1942 AW42 Santal AW42

602 Every year in the month of Daśe (Aug.—Sept.) husband and wife go round to visit their relatives, even when they live very far away, in so far as they know of them, provided they have grown-up sons in their home, otherwise only the man will go. The meaning of visiting relatives is this: that they may not be lost to each other.

Any time they are in want of resources, the relatives on the man's side and those on the woman's side will help each other, when they live in harmony with each other, whether it be in connexion with food or with draught-cattle. And when some among the 602 relatives become orphans, or they are in straits, at such times relatives who have the means 736 will take care of them, or they will divide their own land and fields with them. But such people who are rescued from poverty and difficulties, are mostly ungrateful; only a few people show gratitude. If these ungrateful persons put on just a little flesh, they will show you the thumb (defy you), they may let you go adrift. They will say: Do you imagine that you have supported me, until I have become full grown; why, I have been supported by my own strength. At any time when you are in need, they will leave you in the lurch. They grow up, then look, off they are. But such people will some day get their retribution, if not they themselves, then their children.

602 What women have really to rely on, is their father and male relatives. When husband and wife do not live in harmony, or when the husband worries and beats his wife, or somebody calls her a witch, then she will cry out to her father and male relatives, and they will stand up for her. This is their right, because on the day of her marriage they have stipulated for this. Without informing her father and male relatives they do not go to a witch-finder. And if these are not satisfied with one witch-finder, they will take them to five such places. Because of this the women have great trust in their father and male relatives.

1. When husband or wife dies.

428 If the mother dies before her children are married, then even if their father has got 592 a second wife, the sons cannot demand a division. But if the sons at that time are married, they can, if they wish, set up separate households. The village council meet and divide the property; the father gets one part, and the sons one part each. In case the second wife has not borne the man a male child before he dies, then after his death the sons of the first wife can take possession also of the part left by the father. If they take possession of this, they will have to perform the final funeral ceremonies for their stepmother, when she dies.

428 If any woman becomes a widow without having borne any male child, the father or the 736 male relatives of the man get all the property; the woman gets only one calf, one bundle of paddy, one brass-cup and a cloth, and she leaves and goes to the house of her father and brothers. In such a difficult position some people will keep an elder brother's wife; they will not let her go to the home of her father and brothers. Santals call this very good.

2; Skrefsrud M-5 (1870-1871) 1942 AW42 Santal AW42

the patients recover, they entertain the medicine givers. Since the time of the Santal rebellion they are not helping each other so much. However much they may have, some people are so stingy, they will absolutely not give anything, they utterly refuse to help. But no one likes such heartless people, and if they themselves fall into difficulties, no one will look at them; they rather say: Thakur is punishing this man in retribution. 476 [178]

Paddy and rice, salt and oil, money they also lend each other without any interest, but not for a long time. If they take this for a long time, we call it a debt, and in this case interest has to be paid. For paddy to be used as food 50 pct. interest, for paddy for seed 100 pct. interest, and for money 25 pct. interest has to be paid. 426

h. Working in company with others.

The Santals, men and women, very much like to work in company with others. When men go to the forest or to some hill to cut wood for a plough, a plough-beam, a yoke, rafters, firewood, posts, roof-beams, cross-beams, and so on, then they go in company. To enter a forest alone is very dangerous, and when you have companions, the work is not so strenuous. Also when going to the landlord or to a money-lender, they help each other, and at harvest time they make their threshing-floors together at the same place, in order that they may not be alone at night, and the work also goes easily in this way. Cattle-herd boys mostly herd in company, three or four of them together; by turns they drive the cattle round about, and when there is any danger, they help each other. The women also, when they go to draw water, or go to pluck vegetables and bring leaves, or when they go to a market or a shop to sell or buy, then they go in company with others. 476

i. Looking people up for a talk.

When they have no work the village people go and look each other up a good deal. The men go about on the pretext of asking for lime and tobacco; they chew the tobacco, and also talk together about their health and circumstances and so on. In the evening they come together at the Mānjhi than; they start some humorous conversation, they jest together and talk together without restraint about a thousand matters, to ease their mind. The women also visit each other on the pretext of asking for fire or something; but they mostly have their deliberations at the place where they draw water. There they tell each other their troubles and joys and anything happening in the village. But some women do not, like the men, talk what is blameless; their words may be aggravating, and therefore very noisy quarrels sometimes arise. 521 574 [578]

j. Concerning relationship.

The Santals have really two kinds of relationship, relationship by birth and relationship brought about by marriage. But besides these two kinds the Santals arrange village relationship without there being any real relationship. Some people arrange a relationship in 602

602

accordance with that by birth, and others do the same in accordance with relationship by marriage, without being really related. The village (artificial) relationship is only meant for behaviour and paying respect to one another. Santals address each other in accordance with the relationship they stand in to each other. In certain kinds of relationship you say "thou" to one person, in certain kinds you say "you two" to one person, and in certain kinds you say "you" (plural) to one person.

601
602

Husband and wife, parents and children, brothers and sisters, father's elder brother and his wife on one side and nephew and niece on the other side, sons and daughters of brothers, father's sister and her husband on one side and her brother's children or her husband's nephews and nieces on the other side, the sons and daughters of a man and of his sister, father's younger brother and his wife on one side and their nephews and nieces on the other side, maternal uncle and paternal aunt on one side and their nephews and nieces on the other side, brothers of the wives of maternal and paternal uncles, children of sisters, a man's wife and his younger brothers, a man and his wife's younger brother or sister, grandparents and grandchildren, all these address each other using "thou".

Father-in-law and mother-in-law on one side and son-in-law and daughter-in-law on the other side, father-in-law's elder brother and his wife or mother-in-law's elder sister on one side and son-in-law or daughter-in-law on the other side, father-in-law's younger brother and his wife and mother-in-law's younger sister on one side and son-in-law or daughter-in-law on the other side, the brothers and sisters of the mother-in-law, brother's wife on the one side and son-in-law and daughter-in-law on the other side, elder brother of husband or wife on one side and younger sister's husband or younger brother's wife on the other, husband's or wife's elder sister on one side and younger sister's husband or younger brother's wife on the other side: all these address each other saying "you two" when they speak to one person.

The parents of married pairs with their brothers and sisters on both sides, these are all co-parents-in-law, and when they address each other, speaking to only one person they say "you" to him or her.

The relative whom you address saying "thou" will use "I" of himself or herself; the one whom you address saying "you two" will say "we two" (using the exclusive dual) of himself or herself; and the one whom you address saying "you" will speaking of himself or herself say "we" (both you and I and they and I).

When they say "you two" to one person, they include his wife or her husband; and when they say "you" to one person they include the two married children. And when they answer they in the same way also include those mentioned, without these being present. This is a greatly honouring behaviour.

3t Mukherjea O. Y-4, 5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
AW42 Santal AW42

Rights and Duties of Certain Relations

121 602 593 We consider it necessary to note the peculiar rights and duties of certain relatives and their mutual behaviour, as noticed in the Santal society, to enable us to understand better their kinship organisation.

1. Father

593 [846] During *Chàṭiàr* (a ceremony observed as a cleansing from ceremonial defilement after childbirth) it is the father who will hold and carry the oil with which his kinsmen will rub themselves before the customary ablution. None but the father of the child can discharge this function. The reverence paid by the Santal to his father can be witnessed from his customary ancestor-worship. The average son is very obedient to his father and quarrels are rare.

2. Eldest son

[764] The eldest son is required by custom to apply the first fire to the dead body of his father during cremation.

602 [846] [585] [764] 3. Agnates

Bhàyàds (blood-relatives to the known degrees on the father's side) must assemble at the *Chàṭiàr*, marriage and funeral ceremonies of their kin. They present *bàṇḍia* and cloths and thus lighten the burden of the feasts, to which they are treated in return according to custom.

3t Mukherjea O. Y-4,5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
AW42 Santal AW42

(2) A woman and her husband's elder brothers, or husband's father and uncles; and a man and his wife's elder sisters or elder cousin-sisters, and wife's mother and aunt. 582

(3) Non-agnates excluding cross-cousins and (2) above.

Roughly speaking, a Santal may marry into group (3) but not into groups (1) and (2).

Added to these there are the restrictions based on traditional enmity as between the clans *Tudus* and *Besras* and *Kiskus* and *Màrṇḍis* and *vice versa*, marriages between whom are prohibited according to custom. [614]

Relationship taboos

Added to the food and sex-taboos, the Santals have some tabooed relations between whom not only marriage or sexual union must be avoided, but even their close contact is considered as a sin. Thus a husband's elder brother is a taboo to a Santal woman; she cannot even touch him. Wife's elder sister falls within the list; and we learn that during the general sprinkling of water after the *Baha* (flower festival), one cannot throw water on such relations. And Bengali Hindus may learn with some amusement that their joking relations, as between a bride's father and the bridegroom's mother, is transformed 607 [796] 602

3t Mukherjea O. Y-4, 5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
AW42 Santal AW42

602 into the tabooed opposite pole, with a corresponding prohibition on the bridegroom's father and the bride's mother (Santali *Bala*).

607 *Relations who can joke with one another*

As the husband's elder brother is the subject of a rigid taboo to a Santal woman, repression in one [601] way leads to a corresponding freedom with the husband's younger brother, who is considered to be a joking relation (*Ḍhàulià*). Dr. Campbell in commenting on *Ḍhàulià Sàgài* (relationship between brother-in-law and sister-in-law) writes, "Great freedom is accorded to these in their intercourse with each other, and what is regarded as criminal intercourse in others is propriety with them." And Mr. Man remarks about, "the alarming familiarities," a lad took with his future sister-in-law at a marriage ceremony he had witnessed.

603 607 Relationships of such a kind, but not of such a degree, subsist between a grand-father and his grand-children, between a woman and her elder sister's husband, among the brothers and sisters of a bride and a bridegroom, between the younger brother of the husband and the sister of his wife and the brothers of both the married couple. The Santal society permits them to crack jokes with one another, to tease and play pranks mutually in the enjoyment of their company.

31 Mukherjea O. Y-4,5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
AW42 Santal AW42
MAYURBHANJ

583
533
539

Boy: The silver ornaments on your wrists,
the bracelets of silver on my hand,
We shall give to the ferry-man; even then we
two shall go away to foreign countries.

The dawn of romance

832
836
[124]

It may be interesting at this stage to record the evidence of a middle-aged Santal, who in reply to our questions gave a detailed description of the dawn of love and its working in the hearts of Santal boys and girls, although, we are afraid, there will be some overlapping in the treatment of the subject.

He said, "The first thing that a Santal boy and girl have when meeting together is, what is called, "Bepengeee kusi" (the meeting of the eyes, *Cokshu Priti*, as termed in Sanskrit). Being thus attracted by the eyes, they have two or three glances when they arrive at an understanding. The boy wants to meet the girl who could fascinate him thus." He corroborated that a medium is now selected by the boy, being either his grand-mother, elder brother's wife or an aunt, real or by village-courtesy, and presents are conveyed with his messages of love. "The meeting," he added, "may take place at dances like the "Lagre," when the infatuated youth goes behind the circle where his beloved is dancing and stretches forth his right hand forward,

[602]

[535]

3t Mukherjea O. Y-4,5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
AW42 Santal AW42
MAYURBHANJ

833 sitting position; and the process, lip to lip, breast to breast in "passion's golden purity" is not known to the Santal.

As regards the preliminaries to the final coition prevailing amongst the Santals, we have mentioned that they scratch, bite and kiss. But these are done, according to the Santal, so as not to inflict pain. We enquired whether they avoid kissing the lips [515] owing to the foul smell coming out of mouths. But we gathered that the Santals are very clean as to their dental hygiene; for, from their fifth year upwards they make it a point to brush their teeth with *neem* or *sal* tooth-sticks. So foul-mouth is not a factor. Moreover, the very position adopted in coitus does not permit of kissing the lips. The [533] folk-songs are silent as to such kisses to our knowledge.

831 The Santal discusses sexual matters including coition quite normally and naturally. During our investigations we found men, old, adult and young, answering our questions without any embarrassment and while talking about these things themselves, they evinced as much of detachment as if they were talking about the weather. But there are certain 831 exceptions. There are grades of relationship with 602 whom Santals cannot have sexual talks, *viz.* Marań Baba (Father's elder brother), Mama (maternal uncle), father's and mother's sister. The permissible

Bl Mukherjea O. Y-4,5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
AW42 Santal AW42
MAYURBHANJ

grades include friends, sister's husband, grand-father and elder brother's wife. 83 [602]

From the above, it will be clear that sex and sin have not become interchangeable words to the Santal as we find in civilization. The refinements of sex, being the other name for perversions, are as much unknown to the Santal as cunning and craft. In coition, all that our enquiries revealed was that the various postures adopted by civilized societies are not known to them, as possible or natural. One educated Santal told us that he knew a case in which a man confessed that he cohabited with a girl during the rains, and as no other position was possible, they adopted the averse position of a goat. When the story was narrated, people laughed heartily. On our question as to what would be the effect of the story on women-listeners, he said that they also would have thought it funny, because it is so unnatural. 833 833 522

Although there was considerable discrepancy as to the number of times the Santals indulge in coitus, five times a day can be put as the maximum. But this is before the birth of children. When the parties get children, they cohabit once or twice a day and there may be gaps of a day. When three or four children are born three or four days may be omitted. But as stated before, on the average, they copulate twice daily, and the minimum may be 833

St Culshaw M-5 (1932-1943) 1949 AW42 Santal AW42

husbands are strenuously resisted by the Santals, and the fact that the civil courts administer the Hindu laws of succession leads to many cases of tension. In practice, certain rights are conceded to women for "humanitarian" reasons. To daughters who do not marry—a rare but not unknown phenomenon—and to widows, with or without children, the right to maintenance is given. Since the woman on marriage becomes a member of another clan, the succession to land cannot be carried through her.

Ties of kinship determine standards of behaviour to a great extent. Life in community is an art to be learnt, and the Santal has his own rigid standards of right conduct. The relationship between grandparents and grandchildren is one of deep intimacy and affection, which is no doubt fostered by the necessity for leaving the young children with the grandparents when both parents have to go out to work. The rules governing familiarity and its converse, avoidance, are based on kinship ties. The joking relationship, apart from grandparents and grandchildren, extends to his wife's younger sisters for a man and to her husband's younger brothers and her elder sister's husband for a woman. People within the circle of this relationship can talk freely with one another, indulging in jokes and calling each other names. Conversely, extreme care is called for in relationships which do not fall within this circle. A Santal child must behave with great respect to anyone who belongs to the same generation as his parents. Names are sparingly used between individuals, and relationship terms are the usual form of address. Husband and wife will on no account use each other's names, in distinction from the Hindu taboo, which is enjoined on the wife only. They behave circumspectly towards each other in public. A woman has to carry herself with care before her husband's elder brother. Her dress must at all times be properly arranged in front of him; she cannot sit with her legs dangling over the edge of a bed or the low veranda running round the house, her hair must be arranged, and she does not talk to him at all apart from the necessities of daily life. The rules extend to the finer forms of courtesy. Every Santal knows what is expected of him when he is meeting relatives—whether he has to make a deep obeisance to the ground before the person he has met, or whether he should wait for the other person to greet him first and then acknowledge the greeting by cupping his hands together and raising them towards his chest. A greeting between equals is performed by means of a

St Culshaw M-5 (1932-1943) 1949 AW42 Santal AW42

salute with the right hand; this is raised towards the face, fingers slightly bent, the fingers of the left hand lightly touching the right forearm. When a Santal is meeting his co-parents-in-law, they embrace breast to breast, exchange jokes, and make use of the inclusive form of the dual pronoun. Honoured guests as well as relations are met with dignified courtesy. Few experiences can be more refreshing than to sit in the courtyard of a Santal home after a long and dusty walk. When greetings have been exchanged, one of the girls of the house comes forward to wash the feet and massage with oil the tired calves. This done, tobacco encased in the rolled leaf of the *sal* tree is offered and gratefully accepted.

Addendum to Chapter I

The following figures for the distribution of Santals have been taken from the Statistical Tables of the *Census Report of India*, 1931. Unfortunately, the figures for 1941 do not distinguish Santals from other primitive tribes, district by district.

Bihar and Orissa		*Bengal*	
Monghyr ..	26,742	Burdwan ..	101,522
Santal Parganas	754,804	Birbhum ..	64,079
Hazaribagh ..	129,103	Bankura ..	114,577
Manbhum ..	282,315	Midnapur ..	169,750
Orissa States ..	278,284	Rajshahi ..	25,591
Bhagalpur ..	30,709	Dinajpur ..	130,328
Purnea	46,995	Jalpaiguri ..	27,859
Balasore	15,444	Rangpur ..	7,410
Singhbhum ..	108,890	Malda	72,145
		Hooghly	38,013
		Murshidabad ..	22,725

(Districts from which only a few Santals were returned have been omitted above.)

In Assam, 101,949 persons were returned as Santali speakers.

The numerical and proportionate distribution of the population in the Bankura district was given as follows:

Total primitive tribes	139,063, 12% of the total
Hindus	920,456, 83% of the total

(Of the Hindus, 102,939 were Brahmin, while 353,675 were recorded as belonging to the Depressed Classes.)

St Culshaw M-S (1932-1942) 1949 AW42 Santal AW42

776 782

behalf of a particular social unit, which is sometimes the whole village and sometimes as small as the family. Positively the goodwill of the *boŋgas* is retained by the observance of the due sacrifices, negatively by the observance of taboo rules. Many of the taboos operative in the daily life of the Santals can be directly traced to the necessity for safeguarding the interests of the *boŋgas*. The belief in the dangerous potentiality of women is reflected in the fact that all sacrifices are taboo for women in one sense or another. The fact that they may not eat the flesh of animals sacrificed to the *abge* has already been noted; they may not eat the flesh of any part of an animal sacrificed to *Marañ Buru*, nor the head of any animal killed in a sacrifice at all. Although they may help in the preparations for sacrifices performed in the house, they are kept away from participation in the sacred grove. No woman may climb any of the trees in the grove, nor may she be present when the sacrifices are made, nor eat of the flesh of any animal there offered. The one exception to this rule is that a portion of the flesh of sacrificed animals is reserved for the wife of the priest. Other taboos are related only indirectly to the belief in spirits. The code of behaviour between relatives is sanctioned by a belief that any infringement of its provisions will result in retaliation by the spirits, who cause such diseases as leprosy, or who will inflict dire punishment after death and make it impossible for funeral ceremonies to be duly carried out. Sometimes the retaliation acts swiftly, as in the case related by a Santal concerning an uncle. This relative was on a journey away from home. He stopped at a certain village to obtain a drink of beer, and in his haste, being exceedingly thirsty at the time, he omitted first of all to spill a few drops as a libation to *Marañ Buru* and his ancestors. This forgetfulness of a universal obligation was met apparently by almost immediate retribution. Soon after he had resumed his journey the man fell down—dead.

776 784 562 [262] [782] 784 602.

The *boŋgas* can be distinguished both from the Supreme Being and from various other classes of spirits by the fact that there is between them and the Santals some degree of personal relationship. Many of the *boŋgas* do not seem to have any very marked personal characteristics, but the Santal knows that in the normal course of events he will himself become a *boŋga* and will be dependent then for his happiness on those who come after him. Unless he dies in certain specified ways, once his funeral rites have been completed he will take his place among the ancestors, and his place in the hierarchy of the spirit world depends very much on his social status and correct behaviour in this one. The

776 775

Sa Culshaw M-S (1932-1943) 1949 AW42 Santal AW42

BIRTH AND INITIATION

Society takes little notice of the child before it is born, but, through the person of the father, the family and the clan begin to assert their interests. The restrictions enjoined on the father suggest that although his rôle in the heredity of the child is considered to be a relatively minor one, he is nevertheless an instrument through which the future child may be brought into danger and so hurt the interests of the family. During the period of his wife's pregnancy he must strictly observe the rule against taking life and he must avoid all contact with dead bodies. He is therefore excused from all participation in funeral ceremonies; he may not help to carry a corpse or even enter a house in which a death has taken place. If the annual hunt falls during the period he is allowed to accompany the men of the village, but he is not allowed to kill or to carry a slain animal or bird. He must not eat flesh from the head of any animal slain in the hunt or offered in sacrifices.[1] He is not separated from his wife, and my information suggests that intercourse is usual up to about the sixth month. There is a very strong sentiment against a man having sexual intercourse with another woman during his wife's pregnancy. There appears to be no rule as to when intercourse may be resumed after the birth of the child. The women speculate concerning the sex of the coming child. If the mother begins to look sickly, and especially if she becomes thin round the neck, it is a sign that she will have a boy. Although the "quickening" is not marked by any ceremonial, it is recognized as a definite stage in the life of both the new individual and of the mother. When a woman dies with child the procedure to be followed varies according to whether the death has followed the first quickening or not.[2]

Midwives are engaged for the delivery. They are to be found in every large Santal village, and they are generally old women, themselves grandmothers. They receive no special training, but they develop the "knack" for their work by assisting others, and they launch out on their own practice when they have established a reputation for being handy and capable. The midwife may be someone connected with the family, but, if so, she should

[1] Bodding, in the *Santali Dictionary* (Vol. III, p. 337), reports a custom in connection with the *Jom Sim* festival which accords a certain status to the child before birth. I have been unable to confirm his statement. He says that when the *Jom Sim* is observed in the family of a pregnant woman she is served with two platefuls of rice because she is, or rather she represents, "two souls".

[2] The procedure to be followed in the former event and the reason underlying it have already been described in Chapter 8; see p. 91 above.

Sr Culshaw M-5 (1932-1943) 1949 AW42 Santal AW42

759 not belong to the same generation as the parents of the mother.
• [602] It is better for her to belong to the generation of the grandparents, because it is not fitting for the woman in childbirth to expose her nakedness before anyone who belongs to the generation of her own parents. Midwives are held in respect, and their work puts them in a relation of intimacy with large numbers of their fellow villagers. They are known as *dhai*, the common word in most parts of North India, but they are also referred to as *ojha budhi* and sometimes as *dak' dul budhi*, "water-pouring old women". The midwife is always a Santal, and being an inhabitant of the same or of a neighbouring village, she is not sent for until the pains begin. At the same time all the married women of the village are informed, and they gather at the house in order, as they say, to give courage to the mother now that her time has arrived. On one occasion I was called in to help in the settlement [123] [578] of a dispute in which a woman had been accused of infidelity by her husband. She had gone to her mother's home before the birth of her child—this being an action which is not in accord with Santal ideas—and the strongest evidence of infidelity offered by the husband was the fact that when the baby was born his wife's mother did not inform any of her fellow villagers.

844 The day of delivery is the mother's "sitting day", and the name describes the position of the mother at the time of birth. The mother may sit either on a mat which has been placed on the floor or on a string bed. There seems to be no rule as to which of these two places must be adopted, except that when a woman has been on the floor for the birth of her first child she will continue to sit there for the birth of later children. In either case she remains in the ordinary dwelling house. She is supported at her back by one of the women, who again must be either two generations removed from her or else be of her own generation. It is the duty of the midwife to cut the umbilical cord, and this is not done until after the placenta has fallen. The child is not put to the mother's breast until after the cord has been cut. This is cut with an arrow, having a coin placed beneath it. This is most usually a copper pice, but it may be a coin of higher value when the financial position of the family warrants it, and the coin is given to the midwife. They say that midwives are able to foretell the sex of children still to be born according to the position of certain irregularities on the surface of the umbilical cord which are caused, I am told, by the twisting or congestion of blood vessels. In addition, if they are desired to do